

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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Inez Connor 202/343-5634

## DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT, PUBLIC HEARINGS ANNOUNCED ON FEDERAL PROGRAM TO CONTROL PREDATOR DAMAGES TO WESTERN LIVESTOCK

The Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today released a draft environmental impact statement and announced two public hearings on its program to control livestock damages caused by coyotes and five other species of wild animals in 13 Western States. The availability of the draft EIS was announced in the November 27, 1978, Federal Register.

Public comment is invited through January 12, 1979, and at public hearings to be held in Salt Lake City and Washington, D.C. Both hearings will start at 9 a.m. but registration will open at 8 a.m. for persons wishing to present oral testimony. Each presentation will be limited to 15 minutes. The hearings will be held on January 10 in Salt Lake City at the Tri-Arc Travelodge, 161 West 600 South, and on January 12 in Washington, D.C., in the Department of the Interior Auditorium, 18th and C Streets, N.W.

The draft environmental impact statement examines the present policy and operation of the program as it relates to reducing livestock and poultry losses by coyotes as well as bobcats, black bear, mountain lions, and red and gray fox. It assesses the program's impacts on biological, physical, and cultural environments; human health and safety; recreation; pets and other domestic animals; public attitudes; and the economy. Possible alternatives to the present program are also presented along with their expected impact on environmental factors.

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The Federal predator damage control program, aimed at reducing damages rather than wildlife numbers, supplements overall State efforts for managing resident wildlife causing damages. The Federal program deals primarily with "nongame" species and is conducted on a cooperative basis with State, local, and other Federal agencies and with private individuals and organizations. Federal activities are conducted by request only and are based on available evidence of need. This need is balanced against human, wildlife, and environmental well-being.

Copies of the draft statement are available from the Fish and Wildlife Service offices listed below. It is being released in advance of the final version of the Fish and Wildlife Service report, Predator Damage in the West: A Study of Coyote Management Alternatives, which was prepared in draft form during 1978 and received wide review through public hearings and written commentary. This report will be available on or about January 1, 1979, at the same Fish and Wildlife Service offices.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Lloyd 500 Building, Suite 1692  
500 N.E. Multnomah Street  
Portland, Oregon 97232

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
One Gateway Center  
Suite 700  
Newton Corner, Massachusetts 02158

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
P.O. Box 1306  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 97103

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
P.O. Box 25486  
Denver Federal Center  
Denver, Colorado 80225

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Federal Building, Fort Snelling  
Twin Cities, Minnesota 55111

Alaska Area Office  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
1011 E. Tudor Road  
Anchorage, Alaska 99507

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
P.O. Box 95067  
Atlanta, Georgia 30347

Written comments and requests for information should be addressed to the Director (ADC), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 20240, (202) 632-7463.